

Message Text

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ACTION AF-07

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 L-01 H-01 CIAE-00 INR-05

NSAE-00 RSC-01 PRS-01 SSO-00 /021 W

----- 021488

P R 071100Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2369

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CASC (LIGHT, DAVID)

SUBJECT: LIGHT DETENTION

REF: A) STATE 242630 B) NAIROBI 9270

1. ON NOVEMBER 7 DCM MET WITH MOFA OFFICIAL AGAIN REGARDING LIGHT CASE. MOFA HAS YET HAD NO REPLY FROM NSS TO REQUEST FOR CONSULAR ACCESS BUT OFFICIAL SAID HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO TELEPHONE NSS OFFICIALS TODAY IN HOPES OF OBTAINING QUICK AGREEMENT.

2. DCM AGAIN STRESSED URGENCY OF LIGHT CASE. POINTED OUT LIGHT NOW ENTERING SEVENTH WEEK OF DETENTION AND GSDR HAD NOT YET GRANTED US ACCESS NOR REPLIED TO OUR NOTES OF SEPT. 25 AND OCT. 29 EXCEPT TO SAY INFORMALLY THAT INVESTIGATION WAS UNDERWAY. GSDR INVESTIGATION AND EMBASSY RIGHT TO SEE LIGHT WERE QUITE SEPARATE ISSUES. AFTER SEVEN WEEKS, LIGHT FAMILY IN US WAS VERY DISTRAUGHT; EMBASSY HAD BEEN UNABLE REPORT ON HIS PHYSICAL WELL-BEING; AND FAMILY WAS NOW SEEKING CONGRESSIONAL ASSISTANCE AND HAD INDICATED THAT IT MIGHT TAKE STORY TO PRESS. GRANTING OF IMMEDIATE CONSULAR ACCESS WAS MOST URGENT MATTER. POINTED OUT FINALLY THAT US CERTAINLY DID NOT SEEK PROBLEMS WITH GSDR BUT LIGHT CASE WAS A SERIOUS PROBLEM AND EACH DAY'S DELAY MAKES IT MORE SO.

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3. MOFA OFFICIAL AGREED THAT RIGHT OF CONSULAR ACCESS WAS

FUNDAMENTAL. SAID MOFA HAD BEEN WORKING OBTAIN PERMISSION FOR EMBASSY TO SEE LIGHT AND THAT IT ALSO WISHED AVOID SERIOUS PROBLEMS WITH US.

4. HE SAID HE HOPED TO GET REPLY WITHIN NEXT FEW DAYS. WHEN ASKED IF PERMISSION WOULD BE GRANTED TODAY, HE SAID THAT HE SIMPLY DIDN'T KNOW, BUT THAT HE'D TELEPHONE AS SOON AS HE HAD A RESPONSE.

5. THE FACT THAT SIAD AND OTHERS, INCLUDING FONMIN ARTEH, HAVE BEEN OUT OF COUNTRY SINCE OCT. 26 AND WILL BE AWAY UNTIL MID-NOVEMBER, WHILE OTHER SRC PRINCIPALS ARE THEMSELVES IN THE HINTERLANDS AND OUT OF MOGADISCIO MAY BE A COMPLICATING FACTOR IN MOFA'S APPARENT INABILITY TO GET A DECISION ON LIGHT.

6. WE FEEL THREAT OF UNFAVORABLE PRESS PUBLICITY WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE MUCH OF A FACTOR IN INDUCING GSDR TO MOVE QUICKLY IN REACHING A DECISION ON LIGHT; THOSE IN SOMALI GOVERNMENT WHO WOULD LIKE TO AVOID SUCH PUBLICITY -- AMBASSADOR ADDOU AND OTHERS IN MOFA-- ARE PROBABLY NOT MAKING THE DECISIONS ON THIS CASE. THOSE WHO ARE ARE NOT THOSE WHO WOULD BE MOVED BY THE US MEDIA IN ANY CASE -- QUITE THE CONTRARY.

7. WE DO BELIEVE THAT CROOKS WOULD BE EXTREMELY ILL-ADVISED TO PUBLICIZE THE LIGHT STORY IN KENYA. WHILE THE GSDR MIGHT FIND IT UNDERSTANDABLE WHY LIGHT'S MOTHER MIGHT SEEK ASSISTANCE OF AMERICAN MEDIA, IT WOULD FIND KENYAN MEDIA'S INTEREST IN AN AMERICAN IN SOMALIA LESS UNDERSTANDABLE. GSDR TENDS TO REGARD KENYAN PRESS WITH HOSTILITY, AND GSDR ATTITUDES TOWARDS LIGHT MIGHT THEREFORE BE PREJUDICED EVEN MORE IF KENYAN MEDIA ENTER THE CASE.

8. ALTHOUGH WE CAN FULLY APPRECIATE THE CONCERN OF BOTH MRS. LIGHT AND MR. CROOKS, WE THINK THAT THEIR PRESENCE HERE WOULD NOT IN ANY WAY AID IN RELEASE OF DAVID LIGHT AND COULD BE EVEN MORE DISTRESSING TO BOTH. MRS. LIGHT AND MR. CROOKS MIGHT BE INFORMED THAT DAVID LIGHT'S DETENTION HERE WITHOUT CONSULAR ACCESS IS OUR PRINCIPAL PREOCCUPATION AT PRESENT, AND WE ARE CURRENTLY DOING EVERYTHING IN OUR POWER TO SEE THAT HIS RIGHTS AND THOSE OF THE USG ARE RESPECTED.

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KIRK

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